LAW OFFICE OF CLIFFORD A. DOVER SBN 169838 1634 Fern Street San Diego, CA 92102 cliffdover@aol.com FILED

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CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

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Attorney for Plaintiffs

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

CALIFORNIA SOUTHERN JUDICIAL DISTRICT

PEDRO RAMOS, CATALINA B. RAMOS, as an individual and as Guardian Ad Litem for K.R., minor, THE FAIR HOUSING COUNCIL OF SAN DIEGO, INC.,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

FRITZ NEWMAN dba EL CAMINO 76 MOBILE ESTATES, G.N. SELLERS, III, dba N.A.P. CONSULTING INC., ADELE TEAL,

Defendants.

'08 CV 0026 JM JMA

COMPLAINT FOR MONETARY, DECLARATORY, AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF;

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This action seeks monetary, declaratory and injunctive relief, alleging that defendants engaged in a pattern and practice of housing discrimination on the basis of disability in violation of the federal Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 ("FHAA"), 42. U.S.C.

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II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. Jurisdiction is conferred upon this Court pursuant to California Govt Code section 12989.1, and 42 U.S.C. section 3613 regarding the federal law claim.
- 3. Venue is proper in that the claims alleged herein arose within San Diego County, California.

III. PARTIES

- 4. Plaintiffs PEDRO RAMOS, CATALINA B. RAMOS ("the RAMOS plaintiffs") are the owners of mobile home #57 in the El Camino 76 Mobile Estates, which is located at 220 North El Camino Real, in Oceanside, California ("the Park"). They are the parents of plaintiff K.R., a minor, who was born in 1998.
- 5. Plaintiff K.R. suffers from autism, and is "handicapped" or "disabled" within the meaning of section 802 of the Fair Housing Act, 42 U.S.C. section 3602(h), and California Gov't Code section 12955.3, as defined in Gov't Code section 12926(i).
- 6. Plaintiff FAIR HOUSING COUNCIL OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY, INC., (hereinafter "FAIR HOUSING") is a non-profit corporation operating under the laws of the State of California, with its principal place

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- 7. Defendant FRITZ NEWMAN dba EL CAMINO 76 MOBILE ESTATES ("NEWMAN"), is or was the owner and operator of the El Camino 76 Mobile Estates, a mobile home park (the "Park") located at 220 North El Camino Real, in Oceanside, California.
- 8. Defendant G.N. SELLERS, III, dba N.A.P. CONSULTING INC., ("SELLERS") is or was the owner of N.A.P. Consulting Inc., the management company hired by defendant NEWMAN to manage the El Camino 76 Mobile Estates, during relevant time periods stated herein.
- 9. Defendant ADELE TEAL ("TEAL") is or was the on-site manager hired by defendant NEWMAN to manage the Park during relevant time periods herein.

IV. FACTS

10. The RAMOS plaintiffs moved into a mobile home in the Park in approximately 1999. Prior to moving in, they tried for several months to obtain information regarding the sale of the property before they were able to purchase the mobile home they wanted. When

they first moved into the Park, defendant TEAL expressed to the RAMOS plaintiffs that she had tried to obtain that mobile home as well, and appeared disappointed that the RAMOS plaintiffs were able to buy and she was not. Defendant TEAL has several family members who also reside in the Park.

- 11. From approximately 2002 to the summer of 2005, the RAMOS plaintiffs had a trampoline erected next to their mobile home so that their disabled daughter, plaintiff K.R., could exercise on it as a way of reducing stress and weight control. The trampoline was enclosed within a fenced area, was on a grassy area of the RAMOS plaintiffs' mobile home lot, and had a safety enclosure to prevent someone from falling out of the trampoline. Plaintiff CATALINA RAMOS used the trampoline with plaintiff K.R., and would not allow other kids to use it without their parent's permission.
- 12. In 2005, the RAMOS plaintiffs purchased an upgraded mobile home to replace their older mobile home in the Park. As a result, they were required to move out of their old mobile home during the home replacement period, which lasted approximately two months. Prior to moving out, they asked defendant TEAL if they could rent another mobile home that management had for rent in the Park at that time. Defendant TEAL refused to rent the RAMOS plaintiffs a home in the Park, stating that she did not feel it was right to rent out a mobile home for just a few months. Defendant TEAL also refused to allow the RAMOS plaintiffs to rent an RV and park it in their space while the movers were getting ready to put in their new mobile home. She suggested that the RAMOS plaintiffs find an apartment somewhere else to rent during the time that their home was being replaced. The RAMOS plaintiffs were therefore unable to use their space during

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the time that their new mobile home was being put in, even though they were still responsible for the space rent.

- During the month of August of 2005, while the RAMOS plaintiffs were living in an apartment complex across the street from the Park while their new mobile home was not yet in place, they noticed that the yard next to their mobile home space had been dug up and cordoned off with yellow caution tape. Plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS then asked defendant TEAL, who was near the RAMOS plaintiffs' space lot at the time, what was the purpose of the yellow tape, and why he had not received notice of what was going on. Defendant TEAL ignored him and walked past him. Plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS then contacted an inspector from the City of Oceanside, who came out to inspect the property. As the inspector took pictures, he was approached by defendant TEAL. He asked her why the portion of plaintiffs' property was taped off, and she informed him that she and the management company were re-sizing the lot. She further stated that once the tenant vacated the premises that the management could do whatever they wanted with the lot, and that included resizing it. The inspector for the City of Oceanside then asked plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS if he had stopped paying space rent while he was waiting for his new mobile home, to which plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS responded that he had continued to pay the space rent, and that he was current on the rent. The inspector for the City of Oceanside then told defendant TEAL that plaintiffs did not vacate the property because the space rent was still being paid. Defendant TEAL responded that she was just following orders from her supervisor.
- The next day, the RAMOS plaintiffs returned to their lot to find that defendant TEAL had laborers pouring cement onto the

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15. When the time came to move into their new mobile home, defendant TEAL refused to provide the RAMOS plaintiffs with a new

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lease, in the attempt to prevent them from moving back into their new mobile home. She told them that they had to speak to her The RAMOS plaintiffs' realtor then told supervisor about it. defendant TEAL that the RAMOS plaintiffs had the right to move into their new mobile home under the previous lease. The RAMOS plaintiffs were only then able to move into the new mobile home with their family.

16. The City of Oceanside, via an Inspection Report dated September 19, 2005, informed defendant NEWMAN that he needed to revise the Plot Plan for the RAMOS plaintiffs' mobile home rental space back to the original dimensions that were in place before they put their new home in. However, this never occurred.

In or around March 2007, defendant TEAL placed a notice in the RAMOS plaintiffs' mailbox which stated that the new Park management would be N.A.P. Management. The notice included a date and time that residents of the Park could meet with the new management. On the day of the meeting, plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS noticed that the majority of residents were family members of defendant TEAL, who also were residing in the Park. Plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS approached defendant SELLERS, or the representative for defendant SELLERS, and asked if he could make an appointment to meet with them regarding the fact that his fence had been taken down, that his mobile home rental space had been re-sized and the grassy area next to his mobile home had been cemented over, and that he was being refused the use of a trampoline for his daughter. Plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS was given a business card at that time, and was then told that a N.A.P. Management person would be visiting the property once a week, and that if he had any issues, he could speak to them

at that time.

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- 18. The next attempt to talk to defendant SELLERS while he was at the Park was unsuccessful, as he told plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS that he was heading home, and therefore had to wait until the next time to talk to him. Plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS told defendant SELLERS that it would take only five minutes of his time. Defendant SELLERS again refused the request to talk to him. Plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS then asked defendant SELLERS when, what time, and where could they meet the following week. Defendant SELLERS responded by saying "I don't really know my schedule so I can't really tell you," or words to that effect. The next time that plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS saw defendant SELLERS in the Park, he again asked to meet with him. Defendant SELLERS told him that he was very busy, and that he would definitely meet with him the following week to go over his issues. The next week came and went without a meeting.
- 19. In April of 2007, after two weeks went by, plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS saw defendants TEAL, her husband, and defendant SELLERS riding by his mobile home on a golf cart. Plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS asked defendant SELLERS again if they could meet to discuss his fence and other issues that he wanted to discuss. Defendant SELLERS again said that he did not have time to discuss anything, and then he asked plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS if he worked, in a derisive manner. Plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS told him that in fact he did work. Defendant SELLERS then asked plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS to leave him his phone number, and that he would be contacted when defendant SELLERS got back to his office. At that time, plaintiff PEDRO RAMOS wrote his phone number down and handed it defendant SELLERS, and walked away.
 - 20. The RAMOS plaintiffs received a letter dated April 27,

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2007, from defendant N.A.P. Consulting, signed by defendant SELLERS, stating that defendant NEWMAN denied their request for a reasonable accommodation.

- On May 11, 2007, the RAMOS plaintiffs sent a form letter 21. to defendants that was given to them by plaintiff FAIR HOUSING and filled out by their minor disabled daughter's physician. verified that plaintiff K.R. suffered from autism and obesity and needed exercise to lower stress.
- On July 10, 2007, plaintiff FAIR HOUSING sent a formal letter requesting reasonable accommodation on behalf of RAMOS plaintiffs.
- 23. On July 20, 2007, a meeting was held between plaintiffs PEDRO RAMOS, CATALINA RAMOS, Mary Scott Knoll, who was the Executive Director plaintiff FAIR HOUSING, Erica Jimenez and Branden Butler, both from plaintiff FAIR HOUSING, along with defendant NEWMAN, defendant G.N. SELLERS III, Patricia Huerta from defendant N.A.P. CONSULTING INC, and defendant TEAL. At that time, defendants stated that the RAMOS plaintiffs would be allowed to re-install the trampoline on their rental space for the benefit of plaintiff K.R., provided that they installed a fence to enclose the trampoline. Based on this apparent agreement, plaintiff FAIR HOUSING drafted the terms of the agreement and sent it to the defendants for their approval and comment. Plaintiff FAIR HOUSING did not receive a response from any defendants regarding this agreement.
- The RAMOS plaintiffs received a copy of a letter dated July 20, 2007, from defendant NEWMAN's insurance company, which stated that if the trampoline were to be installed, that it be fenced, and that the tenant provide proof of insurance. This letter

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contradicted the letter sent by defendant SELLERS to the RAMOS plaintiffs dated April 27, 2007, which denied them a reasonable accommodation based on perceived potential liability to the defendants.

- 25. Several weeks after plaintiff FAIR HOUSING sent the proposed agreement to defendants dated July 20, 2007, defendant TEAL approached the RAMOS plaintiffs and told them that defendant NEWMAN wanted to meet with them without any representatives from plaintiff FAIR HOUSING being present. Plaintiff CATALINA RAMOS told defendant TEAL that the RAMOS plaintiffs would not meet with defendants without a representative from plaintiff FAIR HOUSING representing their interests, and asked defendant TEAL why was it that defendant NEWMAN wanted to meet with them alone. Defendant TEAL told her that she did not know why. Plaintiff CATALINA RAMOS then told defendant TEAL to ask defendant NEWMAN why he wanted to meet with them without the presence of a representative from plaintiff FAIR HOUSING and get back to her. Defendant TEAL never responded to this request.
- 26. After being informed of defendants' attempt to meet with the RAMOS plaintiffs without them being present, and their refusal to do so, plaintiff FAIR HOUSING set up another meeting, which took place on October 12, 2007. At that time, defendant NEWMAN said that the RAMOS plaintiffs' request for a reasonable accommodation was not reasonable, because if the RAMOS plaintiffs were allowed to put back the trampoline, that defendants would have to let everyone else do Defendant NEWMAN also denied that plaintiff K.R. even needed the trampoline, and that plaintiff K.R. only thought she needed it. Defendant NEWMAN also said that if a fence were put back up, that the San Diego Gas & Electric Company meter reader would

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have difficulty reading the meter on the property. As a result of this allegation, an investigator with plaintiff FAIR HOUSING was able to determine that there were other homes in the Park that had fences with electric meters in the same location as the RAMOS plaintiffs' meter, where meter reader access was not impeded in any manner.

- During the time and as a result of not having the 27. trampoline, plaintiff CATALINA RAMOS had to miss time off from work because plaintiff K.R. began to act out in class. The lack of having the trampoline caused stress for family. Plaintiff K.R. asked when she could have her trampoline back on an almost daily basis, not understanding why she could not have it back. plaintiffs were also harassed by defendants about things that other residents in the Park were not, such as enforcement of guest parking, and their dog supposedly getting loose.
- By reason of defendants' unlawful acts and practices, the RAMOS plaintiffs have suffered humiliation, loss of civil rights, the quiet enjoyment of their home, mental anguish, bodily injury, including physical and severe emotional distress, headaches, stomach aches, loss of weight and sleep, entitling these plaintiffs to compensatory damages.
- There now exists an actual controversy between the parties regarding defendants' duties under the federal and state fair housing laws. Accordingly, plaintiffs are entitled to declaratory relief.
- Unless enjoined, defendants will continue to engage in the unlawful acts and the pattern or practice of discrimination described above. Plaintiffs have no adequate remedy at law.

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Accordingly, plaintiffs are entitled to injunctive relief.

- 31. By reason of defendants' unlawful acts and practices, plaintiff FAIR HOUSING has suffered injury to its ability to carry out its purposes and to serve the public in its efforts to eliminate housing discrimination, to resolve fair housing disputes, to find and to make available decent housing for persons regardless of disability, and to assure rights to the important social, professional, business, economic, and political benefits of associations that arise from living in communities of one's choice. Defendants' unlawful acts and practices have caused plaintiff FAIR HOUSING to suffer economic losses in staff pay, and in the inability to undertake other efforts to end unlawful housing practices, entitling plaintiff FAIR HOUSING to compensatory damages.
- 32. Defendants' discriminatory conduct as alleged herein was carried out with the intent to discriminate against the RAMOS plaintiffs and their minor daughter, and with a design to hide such discrimination. All acts or omissions alleged to have been engaged in by defendants herein are alleged to have been engaged in with the intent to injure plaintiffs or with a willful and conscious disregard for the rights of plaintiffs, and were fraudulent, malicious, and/or oppressive, entitling plaintiffs to recover punitive damages from each defendant in an amount according to proof.
- 33. In the alternative, defendants negligently failed to hire, train, and supervise and seek training for themselves, their employees and agents, regarding the requirements of state and federal fair housing laws.

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V. CAUSES OF ACTION

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

[Fair Housing Act]

- 34. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 33 of the complaint herein.
- Defendants have violated the Fair Housing Act in that they injured all plaintiffs by engaging in the following discriminatory housing practices:
 - Refusing to make a reasonable accommodation to Α. the RAMOS plaintiffs in the rules, polices, practices, or services, by failing to allow them to maintain a trampoline for the benefit of their minor disabled daughter, plaintiff K.R., where such accommodation is necessary to afford these plaintiffs full enjoyment of their home, in violation of 42 U.S.C. section 3604(f)(3)(A);
 - Interfering, threatening, and intimidating the RAMOS plaintiffs in the exercise or enjoyment of, or on account of them having exercised or enjoyed, rights guaranteed by the Fair Housing Act, by installing the security gate at their dwelling based on plaintiff K.R.'s disability, in violation of 42 U.S.C. section 3617.

B. SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

[Fair Employment and Housing Act]

- Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference paragraphs 1 through 33 of the complaint herein.
 - Under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act 37.

("FEHA"), pursuant to Gov't Code section 12955, it is unlawful to discriminate against or harass any person because of disability. Further, under the FEHA, pursuant to California Government Code section 12927, discrimination in housing includes harassment in connection with housing accommodations; and includes refusal to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services when these accommodations are necessary to afford a disabled person equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.

- 38. Defendants violated the applicable provisions of the FEHA by refusing to make a reasonable accommodation to allow RAMOS plaintiffs to maintain an enclosed trampoline on their space rental next to their mobile home for the benefit of their minor disabled daughter, causing injury to plaintiffs, and by treating them in a hostile and abusive manner.
- 39. Defendants also violated the RAMOS plaintiffs' rights under the FEHA by coercing, threatening, intimidating, and interfering with these plaintiffs in the exercise or enjoyment of rights granted and protected by section 12955.

C. THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

[Unruh Civil Rights Act]

(The RAMOS Plaintiffs and Plaintiff K.R. against defendants NEWMAN and SELLERS only)

- 40. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 33 of the complaint herein.
- 41. Defendants NEWMAN and SELLERS have violated the RAMOS plaintiffs' rights to fair housing under the Unruh Civil Rights Act, California Civil Code Section 51 et seq. in that these defendants

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discriminated against the RAMOS plaintiffs and plaintiff K.R. in the operation of the rental premises, a business establishment, because of plaintiff KR'S disability.

- 42. The conduct of these defendants alleged herein constitutes a denial of full and equal access to housing accommodations to the RAMOS plaintiffs and plaintiff KR within the meaning of the California Civil Code section 54.1(b).
- Pursuant to the Unruh Civil Rights Act, the RAMOS plaintiffs 43. and plaintiff KR are entitled to statutory damages, among other remedies, of up to three times her actual damages as determined by a trier of fact, but not less than \$4,000.00 against each defendant for each discriminatory act.

D. FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

[California Disabilities Act]

- 44. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference paragraphs 1 through 33 of the complaint herein.
- Defendants have violated the California Disabilities Act in 45. that he injured plaintiffs by refusing to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, when those accommodations are be necessary to afford the RAMOS plaintiffs and plaintiff KR, an individual with a disability, equal opportunity to use and enjoy the premises, under California Civil Code \$54.1(b)(3)(B).

E. FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

[Negligence]

Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference paragraphs 46.

1 through 33 of the complaint herein.

- 47. Defendants owed plaintiffs a duty to operate the Sunset Views Condominiums in a manner that was free from unlawful discrimination. Defendants negligently violated that duty by discriminating against the RAMOS plaintiffs based on plaintiff K.R.'s disability by failing to make a reasonable accommodation by allowing them to re-install a trampoline on their rental space next to their mobile home, for the benefit of plaintiff KR, a disabled individual. Defendants' violation of that duty was the result of negligence, including but not limited to their negligent failure to seek training regarding the requirements of state and federal fair housing laws.
- 47. As a legal result of defendants' negligent conduct, the RAMOS plaintiffs have suffered humiliation, mental anguish, severe emotional distress, and attendant bodily injuries and conditions, and other special and general damages according to proof.

F. SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

[Violation of the California Unfair Business Practices Statute] (Cal.Bus.& Prof.Code §17200 et seq.)

- 48. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate herein by reference paragraphs 1 through 33 of the Complaint herein.
- 49. Defendants' acts and practices described herein constitute unfair business practices in violation of California Business and Professions Code § 17200 et seq. (the "California Unfair Business Practices Statute"). Plaintiffs bring this action for injunctive relief and restitution pursuant to the California Unfair Business Practices Statute.

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VI. RELIEF

WHEREFORE, plaintiffs pray for judgment against defendants as follows:

- 1. For an award of compensatory and punitive damages according to proof, but in excess of the \$25,000.00 jurisdictional limit;
- 2. For an award of up to three times the amount of actual damages, but not less than \$4,000.00 each for the RAMOS plaintiffs and plaintiff KR against each defendant pursuant to the Unruh Civil Rights Act;
- 3. For a declaration that defendants have violated the provisions of the applicable federal and state fair housing laws;
- 4. For temporary, preliminary and permanent injunctive relief against all practices complained about herein and for affirmative injunctive relief requiring defendants, their partners, agents, employees, assignees and all persons acting in concert with or participating with them, to take affirmative action to provide equal housing opportunities to all renters;
 - 5. For costs of suit, including reasonable attorneys' fees; and,
 - 6. For all such other relief as the Court deems just.

Dated: January 4 , 2008

CLIFFORD A. DOVER Attorney for Plaintiffs

Complaint

VII. JURY DEMAND

Pursuant to Rule 38 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, plaintiffs hereby request a jury trial.

Dated: January 4, 2008

CLIFFORD A. DOVER

Attorney for Plaintiffs

SJS 44 (Rev. 11/04)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS	DEFENDANTS			00					
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO DIVISION

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January 04, 2008 15:21:45

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USAO #.: 08CV0026 CIVIL FILING

Judge..: JEFFREY T MILLER

Amount.:

\$350.00 OC

Check#.: 418235754

Total->_\$350.00

FROM: RAMOS V. NEWMAN ET AL CIVIL FILING